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Carroll Avenue Streetscape Project
Meeting Summary
February 12, 2004 8:30 AM

Pedestrian issues:

Re-examine placement of pedestrian crosswalks and crossing lights: 1. junction at Laurel 2. junction at Columbia (across Carroll from Tulip) 3. crossing Carroll around Columbia up to Philadelphia.

The crosswalks at Westmoreland and Columbia are not visible to automobiles. Moving them closer to the intersections with Carroll along with traffic calming devices such as bulb-outs would improve pedestrian visibility while effectively channeling traffic.

At the Westmoreland intersection the sidewalks are steep, the crosswalk is invisible to drivers, like mid-block crossings instead of the end of the block. Should tighten up the intersection. Residents from Takoma Tower go across at mid-block and come back at traffic light rather than walk across the Westmoreland crosswalk.

Takoma Towers has the only safe crosswalk but Ride-On has disrespected it. Pedestrians are unsure about which crosswalks are safe.

Think again about making Laurel Ave wider to create "mall" effect and accommodate farmer's market.

Between Columbia and DC work on pinch spaces for pedestrians: by Tulip, car shop. Columbia to firehouse - narrow and steep at driveways - difficult for accessibility. Ramp cut outs are too narrow. New ones should follow ADA.

Paint crosswalk at Columbia and Park and across Carroll Ave. Need a box.

If there's a pedestrian island near Columbia, it should be for helping pedestrians not to slow down cars. Still need room for deliveries.

Accessibility to businesses for customers/deliveries is important when building pedestrian islands, etc.

Improve signage to make it more of a pedestrian zone. Tell drivers pedestrians have the right-of-way.

Want a "pedestrian paradise" like in Chapel Hill. But still need cars to be able to get through to shops, etc.

Parking lot entrance by SunTrust is dangerous..

Should have design for seniors. Wheel-chair accessible, ADA compliant also important. Wheelchair accessibility is difficult near Mark's kitchen, Westmoreland.

Utility boxes on Carroll by Columbia and Tulip unsafe.

Bike safety:

Given the limited budget, use colored or otherwise clearly separated bike path. It might be the best option to address traffic calming and pedestrian and bike safety. It could also unify the project area.

How about a bicycle line on the north side?

I have very much enjoyed the bike paths in Takoma Park. I ask at the very least what already exists is allowed to remain without their funding cut.

Please do not narrow Carroll Ave between savory and Philadelphia. It is ideal for bicycling the way it is.

Could put bike path on both sides of Carroll Ave. Color lanes.

Add bike racks.

Need buffer between bike and sidewalk

Street trees:

The idea of city-planted trees on residential property might address the canopy issue most affordably/effectively.

Tree canopy particularly important. Plantings on private property where appropriate.

If trees are planted think of impact on wires and sidewalk for the long-term.

Trees/tree canopy should be restored especially along Carroll. On public or private land (like Maple Ave).

Important to restore the tree canopy to make pedestrians feel more protected. We know the wires are a problem but we need to do something about the older, dying trees.

Some species do better than oak in a commercial area.
Should look into using dogwoods for street trees.

Bus stops:

Combine improved bus stops with art space and/or information kiosks.

Bus stops are hideous and in bad locations. They would be good places for public art. Mini gazebos would be nice.

Sidewalks:

No bricks. Use stained concrete. Bricks are not as durable or flat. Bricks are difficult to manage for wheelchairs and strollers, especially when loose/poorly maintained. Use colored/stamped concrete.

Bricks would be ok if well-maintained.

Widen the sidewalk using R.O.W. on south side (yards).

Keep it fun for walkers. Dance steps and kids games in sidewalk. Incorporate dance steps (like tango) into some city sidewalks.

Traffic calming:

Enforcement of speed and traffic laws - slow down and calm traffic down with crosswalks, lights and bumps.

Corner of Tulip and Carroll, people speed on Carroll, then whip right onto Tulip. Consider integrating pedestrian light with turns on and off Tulip. Tulip to Carroll - impossible for cars to turn.

Time all lights, at least from Junction (not just Philadelphia) through Laurel, Eastern/Willow, Maple, Metro, DC Old Town, especially rush hour - nothing riles car drivers like waiting 15 minutes to go a couple of thousand feet. They then speed or/and cut through neighborhoods to make up time. Pedestrians cannot cross more safely then either.

Cars and buses go too fast around bend by Savory. Speeding - Columbia, Carroll between Philadelphia and Columbia.

Columbia is becoming a cut-through because of a problem with a left-turn lane to Philadelphia.

Make the area between Columbia and Philadelphia look more like Old Town so it looks less like a speedway.

Want to consider narrowing Carroll with bump outs for buses to prevent speeding. Especially if coordination with traffic lights in Takoma Junction possible. The greens are too short. You should get SHA to study that and pay for it.

Think about adding speed bumps.

Aesthetics:

Canopy of dogwood, flower pots, banners unifying the entire streetscape aesthetically. "Welcome to Takoma Park" - keeping gazebo and brick signatures, Victorian motif. Note: we are known for our citizen activism - "City for Peace" "Tree City" "Nuclear Free Zone" and "Sanctuary City" These are all official designations.

Can we extend the look towards the metro on Carroll?

Gazebo, brick, Victorian lights have really brought up OT. Keep that and extend but not at the expense of safety. Gazebo should be fun not scary/serious.

For some, Victorian can be homogenizing. Banners, brick and Victorian has become a trap and a cliché.

The Town Center is drab - need flowers, banners, hanging baskets.

Flowers, etc would need daily care to keep out garbage.

More aesthetic/promenade. Trees, landscaping, benches.

Design to highlight TP's diversity, activist history. Use opportunities to tell stories about the history of this community. Emphasize diversity. How to get CVS customers up to Old Town?

Why doesn't the clock work?

Design for children/families - FUN! Fun and geared toward children. Some art that is usable for children. Kids are at ground level. Storytelling. Built in sidewalk games and elements. Banjo-man area is where the kids are - formalize a kids' area. SAFE for KIDS. Feel: Mr. Roger's Neighborhood.

Create spaces for dogs - watering and tie-ups.

Add water fountains or potable fountains.

Public restroom. Maybe in the parking garage?

Pavement area in front of Salon Jam is ugly. Need more recommendations so people won't do that in public/private zones.

Make Columbia to Philadelphia section's streetscape flow better from Old Town. It should look the same. Also want to set the tone for extending along Carroll to the metro. It's okay for each business center to keep individual features (street lamps, etc.)

Our reputation is artsy/funky. Like the kangaroo on Carroll. We should add more quirky features by benches/bus stops.

Could do painted animals (like DC's party animals) and better integrate them with the landscape. Could help draw people in.

Could do front yard sculpture program.

For lighting, downlight not uplight. Keep lights low (height-wise). Fix lights and other fixtures rather than replace, and have public works pay for it. Don't spend the grant money replacing what already exists, like lights. Streetlights - new ones could have T-bars to allow banners. But that might not fit with Victorian style. Lighting also helps to cut down on crime.

Banners are just like everyone else's. Should be unique - not like Silver Spring or Bethesda. Banners are too expensive for maintenance. Banners may be expensive and generic.

A kiosk at the entrance to the city. Kiosk could go around existing obstructions or by gazebo, or by parking lot. Kiosks could become dated.

Kiosk - may be difficult to maintain and businesses already allow fliers in their windows to draw in customers. But, they could help make obstructions more useful. Could one go by the gazebo?

Getting control over the Gazebo park is important. Gazebo has temporary signs and banners. We could also have banners that run across streets.

Other ideas:

Increase public information regarding traffic laws including crosswalk right-of-way. Should be adjunct activity - don't spend this limited money on it. Have a series of articles on traffic laws, for instance in city newsletter. i.e., left turn through a solid line is okay.

Don't spend the money on maintenance (lights, sidewalk, etc).

State highway should enforce speed limit.

Loss of power during snowstorm. Would like underground wires.

Better parking signage. Parking is often limited.

Need upgrades for the little parks around town. Could work with the clubs who did them.

Priorities:

Please place an emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle safety first; aesthetics second.

Priority #1: Pedestrian safety. Priority #2: Economic Vitality/ aesthetic unification of areas/ model for connected projects

Setting priorities is hard because everything seems inter-related. It's hard to say one is more important than another.

Carroll Avenue Streetscape Project

Meeting Summary

February 12, 2004 7 PM

Why is Takoma Park Unique?

- Traffic does not go 25/congestion
- Funky and different from other places
- Can we revitalize and make look older & funky/integration?
- Authenticity
- Fresh/Unique (red brick/iron/steel complex is often a whole sale installation)
- More variety
- Quilt
- You can walk to things
- It is an older community that retains its historical community
- People talk to each other
- Most houses have porches/better pub/private
- Not boring to walk through
- People oriented
- Can see children & dogs outside
- Diverse/integrated
- Know store owners
- 4th of July; like Iowa in the 50's but multicultural
- Expression of diversity, aren't afraid to be different
- Carroll is easy walking - center
- Lots of artists/folk festival
- People really care and express that by caring about everything
- Currently struggling commercially
- Major transportation corridor to Washington DC
- Lots of walking/biking

Kids/Art/Public Space

- Gazebo needs work (area)
 - Greenery
 - Lighting
 - Less formal
 - Better playground connection
 - Street separation (buffer)
 - Boulder type kid oriented sculpture (climbable)
 - Existing Public Space dangerous
 - After dark (gazebo)
 - Indirect lighting along brick
 - Wall
 - Safe zone between street & sidewalk/wide sidewalk
- Fun street – mosaic/

- Numbers for kids/
- Street numbers for houses on sidewalk
- Curving path between gazebo area & playground area (w/rock garden)
- Need kid friendly easy-to-use crosswalks
- Light not long enough @ Park & Philadelphia
- Should have something other than ugly signs that tell drivers kids are here
- More benches & outside benches by Takoma Towers
- Look at changing retaining walls – Activate gazebo
- Should have an art piece that kids participated in and will see as they grow older
- Incorporate more by Takoma Towers (seniors) so they come outside
- Plantings/nice fountain
- We have no water
- Kids art show
- Temporary installation space
- Kids love benches & we love to rest (some are good & some are falling apart – kids like that too)
- Mini-destinations
- Shady streets for riding bikes
- Things to climb on
- Summer is very hot & dusty – tree canopy is very important
- Public Space – Gazebo – very under used and has so much potential – mainly vandalized
- Sculpture line – continuous theme (row) along Carroll
- More music (like during holidays)
- Grass behind (gazebo) is not used either
- Can it be more appealing to Towers?
- Art theme that carries through the entire Carroll Street
- Special pavers along Carroll Street
- Mural walls in Frederick
- Could have all different art along street
- Bend at Columbia & Tulip is hardest point
- Shortest distance – teenagers, tired/lazy people suffer\
- Make Carroll Avenue an art walk
- Benches – often decrepit and need repair
Should be more interesting (artsy bench)
- More sculptures – key places – not obvious; should be a surprise/discovery
 - Mermaids in strange places
 - Planting around benches
 - Birds in Riverdale
 - Bus shelters
 - Murals (on walls)
- Takoma is a bat place (a good nature place) - a bat sanctuary
- Keep glance away from traffic and on fun stuff
- Retain open places – park across from gazebo – the playground behind is old
 - Needs more seating
 - Amphitheater/steps facing gazebo w/enclosure by traffic
- Laurel by Farmers' Market Median not practical
- Good for traffic, bad for Farmers' Market
- A wider median needed

- Appropriate for more sculpture
- Not mulch, no curb
- Seating in median

Kids

- Wider sidewalk (double stroller), bikes
- Separation from traffic
- Something interesting in sidewalk (like big feet) to keep little kids focused on sidewalk, not wandering
- Sculpture in yards (N.G.)
- Nature walk down street

Aesthetics & Building Vitality

- Signage – identifies neighborhood
- Future development – setbacks
 - Emphasize reuse, rehab
 - Compatibility
- Historic nature – Fire Hall
 - Community Center – How do they tie in?
- Funkiness to Takoma Park
- Different materials
- Recycle materials
- Reestablish tree canopy to reduce the scale
- Aesthetic/use issue
- High sodium/high poles – utilitarian
- Pedestrian-friendly lights
- Focused task lighting
 - Lights down low
- Bike Lane
- Safety issue – lighting past the band stand
- Hiding places
- Safety must be perceived
- Green live plants are important
- Defensible spaces
- Beyond concrete – cobble stones – be careful where they are used
- A consistent brick streetscape is preferred by some
- Think beyond the state-DC line
- Contrast with light and color
- Preserve variety and idiosyncracies
- Vitality – must be appealing to those who use the businesses
- Easy to get to parking
- Metro (ugly!) old town
- Mom and Pop stores must be able to sustain themselves
- Group stores
- Subway – visually compatible w/old town – scale
- Need a Main Street Program
 - What kind of line would you be if you were a line?

- ✓ A creative line
 - ✓ It's a little loopy but likeable
 - ✓ Friendly fun
 - ✓ 4th of July parade
- Renovating store fronts on Laurel Ave.
 - Been done as waves, officially art deco, the sanctioned form
 - The chintzy looked better, more authentic
- Hate to be chichi – not so attractive, not so picture perfect
- Buildings - similar in scale
 - Columbia to S. Junction has lost its scale
 - More color/lots of color and texture but with common theme not like kids did it
 - ✓ Not sleek
 - ✓ No brushed aluminum
 - ✓ Natural colors, wood
- Green Building
- Native species
- The streetscape looks a little down on its heels
 - Maintenance worn out
 - Limited landscaping – could have more
- Mosaic - if you had colored chalk, what kind of sidewalk design?
- 7100 Block – sidewalks really bad
- A unity from Metro to Junction
- There is a big break from old town a lot to Metro
- Mosaic using different paving materials
- Interesting things in sidewalk, but smooth
- The clock tower is under designed – squished between two traffic lanes
- Whole median is under designed
 - Trees (safe ones, stay away from big ones, and elms), s
 - Shading
 - Flowers
 - Make more amenable to gathering even when the Farmers' Market is not there
- Laurel Ave
 - One way street
 - Keep streets together paving to make it the heart when you enter
- Need parking – there are unmetered spaces
 - To increase turnover
- Seems very linear – can we make it curvier?
- Make it more like a river flow
- Neon – incorporate more
- Art Deco – Victorian
- Need to replace the dead azaleas
- Make more gathering/walking space
- Changes of width in the business district
 - Undulating flow – sometimes bigger space, sometimes narrower
- I wish we could have more /better restaurants
- Outdoor seating – patio seating
- Dramatic change between the commercial, and fizzles out going toward Columbia
- Close Laurel to traffic with more pedestrian

- Still have an event on the median by shopping
- Neon signs are kind of cool if not too big
- Most signs fit scale of building
 - Discourage people from breaking out of that
 - Discourage backlit signs
 - Entry and exits to the future parking garage
- Green living barriers between sidewalk and light industry, existing businesses
 - Make existing businesses fit into streetscape and more friendly to community/historic design
- Historic Nature
 - Fire Hall
 - Community Center
 - ✓ Make compatible connection
- Funkiness to Takoma Park
- Signage to identify neighborhood
- Reestablish tree canopy
- Line
 - Beautiful
 - Irregular
- Texture – Quilt-like, Beautiful
- Lighting – Pedestrian Friendly
- Go beyond grey concrete
 - Texture
 - Natural materials
 - No brushed aluminum
- Green live plants
- Contrast – light color/visibility
- Preserve variety and idiosyncracies
- Metro – Ugly – Old Town
- Not chintzy/ Not picture perfect
- Art Deco vs. Victorian

- Green Building and native plants
- Mosaic – more color texture but with unity
- Interesting things in sidewalk
- Clock tower – under designed
- Neon
- Signs – fix scale of building

Pedestrian safety

- Bike
 - Traffic Flow
 - Traffic Calming
- Residential
 - Barrier
 - Grass strips/Trees
 - Widen sidewalks

- Old Town likes – barriers ex. (parking, trees)
- Bike Lane Strips – Barrier for Pedestrians / Traffic
- Median Islands– Safe Crossings
- Light Timing for Pedestrian Crossing – Conflicts with turns and pedestrian crossing
- Add Crosswalks– Columbia, Park, Philadelphia
- Site Distance – Westmoreland
- Crosswalks at Westmoreland ADA/Ramp
- Likes
 - Separation of pedestrians and traffic
 - Grass Strip/Trees
 - Bike Safety
 - Crosswalk at Columbia
 - Tighten radius
- Dislikes
 - Bumps out of Walnut Avenue
 - Impediments to walking
 - Handicap Ramps
 - Carroll & Philadelphia Avenue intersection left turn lane (Traffic Break Up)
- Sidewalks big enough for three (3)
- Traffic Barriers – if green, maximize
 - Bike Lane (widths) Stripe Color
- Street Drainage Problems
- Widen Curb – Curb (Can we move curbs back?)
- Residential East side driveway aprons - ADA
- Drainage issues
- Bump outs on Piney Branch – Effective?
- Columbia – Island Intersection
- Traffic Signals
 - SHA
 - Pedestrian Crossing – not responsive, long wait
 - Improved crossing at Philadelphia Ave. with crosswalk
- Westmoreland L.O. sight and ramps
- Add more crosswalks - residential area
- Add pedestrian stops
- Police enforcement at Philadelphia Ave.
- Westmoreland
 - Tighten sidewalk radius by shampoo
 - Line of sight (Parking)
 - Enforcement of parking in designated areas/ Limits
- Business at Columbia – Parking Lot – Physical barrier from sidewalk
- Lighting downward
- Higher volume of traffic on Carroll than can be accommodated by main thoroughfare
- IMPACTS OF DEVELOPMENT ALONG METRO D.C
- Carroll Ave – Ridge Road
- Westmoreland Ave.
 - Grade
 - One-Way Traffic
 - Site Distance

- Tulip – Site distance and grade
- Don't – Diminish air quality (bumps)
- Park & Carroll – fence in intersection
- Traffic Light at Tulip –
 - No light
 - Adequate site distance
 - Light only for pedestrians - Carroll
- Residential
 - Side walk to narrow
 - Utility poles/electric boxes
 - Bus shelter/trash cans
 - Transformers
- Sidewalk
 - Frontage Zone / Utility Zone
 - Sidewalk passable
- Create “Barrier” for pedestrians and traffic
- Speeding is a problem – Columbia & Phila.
- Grass strip with trees
- Look at front yard lots next to Fire Station
- Restore tree canopy / Safety
- Native Species - Don't destroy habitat (Norway Maples)
- Underground Utilities \$\$\$
- Decrease traffic lane width on north side (Utility poles are a barrier)
- Bus traffic and Safety (How does this work with bike lanes?)
- Streetlighting
 - Material
 - Downlighting
 - Need better lights along sidewalk
 - Historic Nature - lighting
 - Look at lighting – 7100 Block
 - Keep continuity – If we can't afford lights, install conduits for future
- Pedestrian Street Lighting
 - Globe Lights
 - ✓ Farmers Market Area “Great” Areas of lighting
- Traffic Calming
- Maintain historic “Takoma” feeling
- Crosswalks – ADA
- Site distance / grades of intersections
- Pedestrian Buffer – Grass strips and Trees
- Bike Lanes and Stripes
- Enforcement of Speeding
- Tree canopy – Native Species